THE SECOND DAY.

19th November, 1907.

The Assembly met at 11 A. M. on Tuesday, the 19th November.

In opening the proceedings of the day, the Dewan said:—

Gentlemen,—The questions proposed by you have been classified under the heads of 'General' and 'Local.' We shall take up the general subjects first. They will be read out to you in the order in which they appear in the printed list. You may have your say on each subject and I shall give due consideration to what you may represent and try to give answers satisfactory to yourselves as well as to myself.

GENERAL SUBJECTS.

SUBJECTS.

1. ***Commutation of grain tax on Sripadom lands into money.***

I. Land Revenue, Survey and Settlement.

Mr. A. Harihara Iyer (Member, Chirayinkil Taluk) said that, when the subject was brought forward at the last session of the Assembly, Government declined to grant the request on the ground that Sripadom lands were not Sirkar lands and that any change in the method of dealing with those lands could be effected only with the consent of the Sripadom Palace. That, the member contended, was not correct, as the practice had all along been to treat those lands in the same way as Pandarapattom lands. He instanced certain important measures affecting the land revenue administration such as reduction of kist instalments, abolition of fees on alienations of lands, writing off arrears of tax, and said that those were applied to Sripadom lands also. Further, Sripadom officials were being regarded as public servants and their communications allowed to be transmitted by Anchel on service. The civil suits instituted by the Sripadom authorities were being conducted by the Sirkar Vakils. In fact, no distinction of treatment was being practically kept up between Sirkar and Sripadom lands and it was very hard that the holders of Sripadom lands should be denied the benefit of the recent reform abolishing payment of tax in kind. He also

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SUBJECTS.

referred to the concession given in the year 1065 for payment of one-fourth of the paddy tax in money as in the case of Sirkar lands, and to the extension of the privilege recently to another one-fourth, and requested that the remaining portion of the paddy tax might also be commuted into money. If Government should consider that the lands were not like Sirkar lands, the member urged that Government might be pleased to recommend the matter for the consideration of the Sripadom Palace and obtain the concession for the landholders.

Mr. N. Parameswaran Pillai (Member, Chirayinkil Taluk) in supporting the prayer, said that the procedure of Government was the same in regard to Sripadom and Sirkar lands. The transactions were all between Government and the tenants; the survey and settlement were conducted at Government expense; the same Regulation governed the recovery of revenue, and the same rules regulated the registry of puduvals, whether Sripadom or Sirkar. The Royal Proclamations abolishing payment of Adiyara in certain cases of adoption and of Ubhayampalisa and Paduthali-palisa applied to Sripadom lands also. In regard to the reason that the entire tax, if commuted into money, might not suffice for Sripadom expenses, the member quoted figures and said that the fear was unfounded, especially in view of the large increase of revenue derived since the settlement of Sripadom lands and the fact that Rs. 63,000 had already been invested on interest.

Dewan's reply.—I have carefully read all the papers about this question, and the facts you have mentioned are correct. The Sripadom lands are not Sirkar lands. They are the property of Her Highness the Senior Rani. You yourselves admit that. It is true that Government are now managing these lands for Her Highness, because Her Highness happens to be a minor. The management being in the hands of our officials, it proceeds practically on the same lines on which the administration of the Government land revenue proceeds. But our position is only that of a trustee for Her Highness; and therefore it is doubtful if we shall be justified in making any material changes, during Her Highness' minority, which are likely substantially to reduce her income. That is the real difficulty.

Then, as the first speaker (Mr. Harihara Iyer) has himself mentioned, there *have been* remissions already given by Her Highness in regard to the taxation on those lands. Till 1065, the whole tax upon these lands was

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being paid in kind. In that year, Her Highness the late Senior Rani remitted one-fourth of the tax in kind and agreed to levy it in money at the old commutation rate o 6 chuckrams per para. Then again, you received a further concession in March last, when Government, acting on behalf of Her Highness the present Senior Rani, remitted another one-fourth of the tax in kind and agreed to levy that at the new commutation rate of 11 chuckrams per para. That is where you stand now. Before 1065, the entire tax was being paid in paddy; now one-fourth is recovered at 6 chuckrams per para, one-fourth at 11 chuckrams per para, and only the remaining one-half in kind. You now ask that this remainder also should be converted into money. For that, the reply, I give on behalf of Government, is that you have been on the whole treated with consideration both by Her Highness the late Senior Rani as well as by Government acting on behalf of Her Highness the present Senior Rani and that, during the minority of the present Senior Rani, we are not prepared to make any substantial changes in the collection of Her Highness' revenue which are likely to reduce her income.

2. *Commutation of grain tax on Sripandaravagai and Kandukrishi lands into money.*

Mr. Eswaran Tampi (Member, Eraniel Taluk) requested that the paddy tax levied on Sripandaravagai lands might be commuted into money. He said that Government would not incur any loss thereby and that the concession would be a boon to the ryots concerned and would remove a source of oppression on the part of the lower subordinates. If the commutation rate of 11 chuckrams per para could not be applied to Sripandaravagai lands without a regular enquiry, the member requested that, in the interval, the tax might be realised at the niruk rates obtaining at the time of the harvest.

Mr. N. Mathevan Pillai (Member, Neyyattinkara Taluk) who was to have spoken on the subject as regards Kandukrishi lands was absent.

Dewan's reply.—The whole question of the Sripandaravagai lands was dealt with by Mr. Madhava Rao when he framed his scheme for the conversion of paddy tax into money, and in his Memorandum dated 10th October 1905, he has mentioned the grounds upon which he proceeded. He then recommended to Government that all the Sripandaravagai lands should be excluded from the scheme. His reason was that the rents of these lands, though collected by the Land Revenue staff, did not go into the general revenues of the State, as the lands were owned by the Sri

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